

the rehabilitation of paralyzed individuals, in the design of the modern wheelchairs, for his promotion of the understanding of secondary disabilities among wheelchair users, and for his persistent efforts to improve the availability of high quality products and services to veterans who use wheelchairs. Dr. Cooper's work has affected thousands of veterans by elevating the quality of the wheelchair produced by manufacturers and provided by the VA and other third party payers. Dr. Cooper is one of the world's foremost authorities in wheelchair design and technology. His impact on the lives of people with disabilities has been, and will continue to be, truly profound.

Mr. Speaker, the name Olin E. "Tiger" Teague is synonymous with exemplary service to the Nation's veterans. The late Congressman Teague served on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for 32 years, 18 of those years as its distinguished chairman. No one who worked with him on veterans' issues ever had to ask why he was called "Tiger." He set the standards by which we can best serve all veterans. I know my colleagues join me in offering our deep appreciation to Dr. Noffsinger and Dr. Cooper for their concern, dedication, and innovation in meeting the special rehabilitation needs of veterans. We congratulate Dr. Noffsinger and Dr. Cooper for the excellence of their work and for the distinguished award they received.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 5409 "THE CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST RESPONSIBLE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION ACT OF 2002"

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2002

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I would thank my colleagues Congressman CALVERT, Congressman HUNTER, Congressman CUNNINGHAM, Congressman RADANOVICH, Congressman DOOLITTLE and Congresswoman BONO for their commitment to meeting southern California's energy demands and their continued concern for the communities and property owners affected by the need for a new transmission line.

The Cleveland National Forest Responsible Electricity Transmission Act of 2002 will create a corridor through the Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest, whereby a 500 KV transmission line can be built to connect the Valley-Serrano transmission line (owned by Southern California Edison) to the Telega-Escondido transmission line (owned by San Diego Gas & Electric). The approval of this corridor will greatly strengthen a fragile California transmission grid while protecting hundreds of homes and businesses from condemnation.

This bill is the result of discussions and negotiations among Members of Congress and other interested parties for nearly a year. Our legislation follows the basic premise that we should utilize lands set aside for public use before condemning private property for a transmission line. Nearly 97 percent of the corridor created by our bill will utilize public lands. SDG&E, the utility attempting to secure a corridor for a transmission line, has pledged

their support for our legislation in order to avoid making a decision that would be detrimental to the people of the Temecula Valley.

Our bill will do something else that California desperately needs. It will allow a local water district to connect a new source of power to the grid.

The proposed hydro electric facility on Lake Elsinore, adjacent to the corridor, will enable the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District to place 600 megawatts of green peaker power onto the transmission grid when the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) needs it.

In order for this project to become a reality, our legislation needs to become law. California needs both improved electrical infrastructure and a greater generation capacity: our bill is a step towards achieving these goals.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here talking about this common sense legislation. I, along with my colleagues, look forward to working with Chairman BARTON and Chairman TAUZIN to make this important legislation law.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VERLYAN RUTH BYRD

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2002

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Verlyan Ruth Byrd.

Ruth passed from this life on July 28th. Her passing left a gap in the lives of those who knew her, but also in the lives of many others who did not.

She was a compassionate and tireless advocate on behalf of others who were, like her, impacted by the Government Pension Offset provision. Ruth worked to repeal the Offset, knowing how such a repeal would help others whose Social Security benefits were reduced as a result of the Offset.

Ruth had many friends who joined her in her efforts to repeal the Offset and will carry on in her memory. One of those friends, Cory Grah, continues to make an impact on this issue.

It's for people like Ruth and Cory, that I once again call on my fellow members of Congress to join me in our efforts to repeal the Government Pension Offset once and for all.

There are more Ruths and Corys out there, and they deserve better.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE WEEK

HON. CHARLES W. STENHOLM

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2002

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Osteopathic Medicine Week, October 6–12, 2002, a week when the nation's 49,000 osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) are particularly dedicated to increasing the public's awareness of access to care issues.

For almost 25 years now, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and its members have celebrated the osteopathic medical community's unified effort to educate the nation

about issues influencing the American health care system. I am especially pleased the theme of this year's NOM Week is "Access to Care."

Access to care promotes appropriate entry into the health system and is vital to ensuring the long-term viability of rural health care delivery. Without access to local health care professionals, rural residents are frequently forced to leave their communities to receive necessary treatments.

When D.O.s, student doctors and supporters of osteopathic medicine travel to Las Vegas, NV to attend the AOA's 107th Annual Convention and Scientific Seminar, nearly 8,000 will receive the latest information on access to care issues such as professional liability insurance (PLI), uninsured children, bioterrorism and mental health. I applaud the osteopathic medical community for emphasizing patient access issues, so important to the 17th District of Texas and the Nation.

Take for example, access to children's health care. While nationwide participation in the State Children's Health Insurance Program has increased since its 1997 inception, many parents whose children qualify for the program have not yet enrolled them.

And let's not forget the access to care barriers facing our minority populations. It is a proven fact that America's many racial and ethnic groups are frequently at a disadvantage on a wide-range of measures, including effective patient-physician communication, overcoming cultural and linguistic challenges, and availability of health care and insurance coverage.

Access to health care can be established only when medical professionals are available to provide quality health care. Over the past few years, medical liability premiums and payments have escalated out of control causing health care quality, access, and cost problems. While some states have passed professional liability insurance (PLI) system reforms, not every state has effective laws in place. The osteopathic medical community recognizes many states face critical PLI system problems.

For more than a century, D.O.s have made a difference in the lives and health of my fellow citizens in Texas as well as all Americans. Overall, more than 100 million patient visits are made each year to these fully licensed physicians able to prescribe and perform surgery. D.O.s serve the needs of rural and underserved communities and make up 15 percent of the total physician population in towns of 10,000 or less.

D.O.s are certified in nearly 60 specialties and 33 subspecialties. D.O.s complete and pass: four years of medical education at one of 20 osteopathic medical schools; a one-year internship; a multi-year residency; and a state medical board exam. Throughout this education, D.O.s are trained to understand how the musculoskeletal system influences the condition of all other body systems. Many patients want their health care provider to have this extra knowledge as a part of their health care.

In recognition of NOM Week, I would like to congratulate the over 2,500 Texas D.O.s, the 453 students at University of North Texas Health Sciences Center at Fort Worth, and the 49,000 D.O.s represented by the American Osteopathic Association. Your contributions to the good health of the American people are commendable.